Cursory Remarks

UPON A

SERMON

Preached before the

LORD MAYOR,

AT

St. Mary-Le-Bow, Jan. 30th 169⅔.

In a Letter to Sir P. D. Bar.

Odi profanum Vulgus ——

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SERMON

A True Protestant Bridle:

FOR SOME Cursory Remarks UPON A SERMON Preached before the Lord Mayor.

SIR,

I Hope these short Officious Remarks will gain your Pardon, if not Approbation, since they are wholly levell'd against the Licentious Principles which are so much in Vogue; and which Naturally tend to shake our Fundamental Establishment, and (under the Pompous Appearance of Christian Liberty) to Shrivel Their present

Majeſties by Degrees into a meer *Fairy Queen*, and an *Emperour of the Moon.*

Among all the Vitious and Impertinent Humours of the Age we live in, there is none more equally Lamentable and Ridiculous, than that of Aſperſing things Venerable and Sacred, and ſpeaking Evil of Perſons Illuſtrious in their Generation: This is commonly the Refuge of Mean Varlets, who have no other way to make any Tolerable Figure in the World, but by finding Fault with the Conduct, Performances, and Inadvertencies of Great Perſonages: 'Tis an eaſie Province that any half-witted Pedant may aſpire to, without the Art of Thinking, or Gift of Ratiocination; and he that is neither Honourable nor Beautiful, nor Learned, nay the Sport and Triumph of Ingenious Converſation, can, without any Talent, play at Criticizing, and readily Commence Godly and Cenſorious; and when he is once arriv'd to this height of Confidence; with what Pride and Scorn will he trample upon his Superiours, and look down upon the braveſt, and moſt Accompliſht Men in the World? Hence it comes to paſs, that every Notion-ſtruck Tradeſman, and Purſe-proud Mechanick (whoſe Learning and Education never carried him higher than the *Gazette* or *Counting-*

ting-Book) can run down the whole Eccleſiaſtick Order with an Infallible Wink or Nod; and will take a kind of Malignant Delight in making Remarks upon the little Spots of Bright and Elevated Souls: Hence it is, That they who are moſt Incapable of receiving Inſtruction, are moſt forward to give Advice; and he that is Purblind in the moſt Obvious Matters of Religion and Polity, thinks himſelf Qualified to Expound Myſteries, and Spell out the Fates of Kingdoms: They, who by their Studied and Enormous Villanies, are fit to be Objects of Publick Juſtice, are moſt forward to Reproach the Names and Memories of Kings; and ſome have been ſeemingly ſerious in Publiſhing *Pleas for Peace*, after they have been Nurſt, Train'd up, and Harden'd in the Black Art of *Sciſme* and *Rebellion*: Nay, what's moſt deplorable of all, every little half-Conforming Theologue, that is Illuminated into Diſtraction, can juſtle Omnipotence out of his way, give encouragement to a Multitude to do Evil, and repreſent the Mild, the Peaceable, and Salutary Doctrine of Non-Reſiſtance (which has been the Glory and *Palladium* of the Chriſtian Church in all Ages) as an Antichriſtian *Mormo*, and *Bugbear* to a Kingdom.

Among ſuch Doughty Champions for Truth, a late Prevaricator at *Bow*, hath deſcended to Liſt himſelf: He tells us, *The pretence of a High Court of Juſtice to judge of their King, was an upſtart Opinion hatcht by the Heat of War; That 'twas an Infect of a Days duration; and is now diſown'd by all ſorts of People amongſt us.* Serm. p. 16. *That Flattery is one of thoſe Sins, which by their own particular Energy occaſion the loſs of a good Prince, and thereby bring Affliction to a People,* p. 17. *That this Deteſtable Sin of Flattery has drawn Princes to Aſpire at Arbitrary Power; and God knows, how great a Share it had in the Calamity which we Lament this Day: That the Notion of* Paſſive Obedience *has proved Fatal to thoſe that have hearken'd to it, That Liberty gives the True Reliſh to all the Comforts of Life:* pag. 18.

To all which I Anſwer, That Our Reverend Teacher, like ſome Blind and Bewildred Traveller, ſeems to have loſt his Way; and while he affects to Dictate ſo Magiſterially out of the Common Road (as if he had got a *Dutch Synod* within him) he falls into a Complication of Abſurdities; each of which is a moſt Intolerable Blunder. For Firſt, *The pretence of a High Court of Juſtice* cannot properly be called a Novel Upſtart Opinion, ſince *Buchanan* and *Knox*, and ſome

Engliſh

Engliſh Apers of *Swarez* and *Mariana*, had, by their Dangerous Tenets, and Pulpit Suggeſtions, given ample and ſufficient Encouragement to ſuch Proceedings. However, That we may not inſiſt upon Ceremony, the main ſubſtantial part of the Tragedy, was the Black Reſult of Deliberate Malice, both *Roman* and *Fanatick*; and was ſo far from being the Random Product of *the Heat of War*, that the Deſign was carried on by Dark Conclave, Clandeſtine Cabal, Painful Preaching, Long Prayers, Frequent Faſtings, Godly Sorrow for the Sins of the Nation, much Mortification, Seeking of the Lord, and all the Cooleſt Methods that can be thought on.

Secondly, It was ſo far from being an *Inſect of a Days duration*, That, as it was the moſt Prodigious Monſter on this ſide Hell (and never Equall'd by any Poet's Invention, Enthuſiaſtical Draughts of Antichriſt, or Melancholy Viſion of a Pining and Deſpairing Lover) ſo was it alſo Nurſt with all Imaginable Tenderneſs and Care, Chriſten'd by *Milton* and other Famous Apologiſts, and borne about with great Oſtentation and Triumph. And whoſoever ſhall peruſe the *Secret Hiſtory* (propagated throughout the Nation) the Works of *Milton* (of ever Bleſſed Memory) the

the Letters of *Ludlow* (that pretious Orator in Chriſt Jeſus) I ſay, whoſoever ſhall peruſe the Writings of theſe Legendary Scriblers, and obſerve withal what kind Entertainment they have met with in the World, amongſt the *well-affected, the harmleſs, and the hidden ones*; will readily conclude, That there are Thouſands among us who are ſo far from *diſowning*, that they ſecretly Applaud, the Glorious and Triumphant Villany.

Thirdly, I do readily grant, That the *deteſtable Sin of Flattery* had a Finger in the Deluſion, which led to this Fatal Cataſtrophe, and the Kingdom's Funeral; Nothing can be more plain, if we do but open our Eyes, and the Hiſtories of thoſe times together. Indeed 'twas ſuch Nauſeous, Masking, and Dawbing Flattery, as was never Practic'd before: 'Twas an Incurvation of Mind, a Degeneracy and Baſeneſs of Soul, beneath the wretchedneſs of thoſe Creeping Spirits of Old, that have Magnified the Spittle, Spots and Freakles, and Ador'd the Deformities of Perſons in Authority and Power. The Rabble were Deified out of their Wits by the Officious Fawning Demagogues of the Times, and Careſt into all the Abſurdities of Speech and Action: They were made the Divine Fountain of all Authority, by

by a Godly Legerdemain; and abus'd into ſuch Vain and Glorious Idea's and Notions of themſelves, that they ran ſtark Mad at laſt with Zeal and Reformation: By the help of Grace, a Company of *Weavers* grew as Infallible and Definitive, as a *Synod* or *General Council*; and a Zealous Brother, by Vertue of his Saintſhip, ſcorn'd to give the Wall to his Prince that was Unregenerate. Now when ſuch Fundamental Follies as theſe are entertain'd as Oracles, I appeal to the Senſe of Univerſal Mankind, how is it poſſible for the moſt obliging Monarch to ſit ſecure in his Throne, or withſtand the Shock of an Imperious Rabble?

Whatever Charms the Vitious Arts of Flattery may have, to draw ſome Princes into an Affectation of Arbitrary Dominion, 'tis plain, That the Soul of our *Royal Martyr* was as much above Flattery in the days of Proſperity, as it was above Fear, Malice, and all other Temptations in times of his Solitude and *Tryal*. Whatever *Peccadillo's* in Government lookt that way, were no matter of Choice, but Fatality; and cannot be Conſtrued his Crimes, but his Misfortunes. And ſurely to Rake into the Wounds of Afflicted *Majeſty*, is a Baſe and Cowardly Aſſault, and ſomewhat more than Barbarous and Inhumane:

The Benign Temper of the *Witch* of *Endor* (under more provoking Circumſtances) abhorr'd ſuch Cruelty as this, which is fit only for the *Conſcience* of a *Devil*.

Fourthly, That the Notion of *Paſſive Obedience* may ſometimes prove Fatal in reſpect of Temporal Advantages, is as Plain and True, as any of Mr. *Dod*'s *Sayings*: And ſo Humility, Patience, Modeſty, and other Chriſtian Vertues may prove a Bar to Preferment in Bad Times; and the Evil Conſequences do no more Conclude againſt the one than the other. The Unkind Inſult of a Tyrannical Prince doe's no more give Allowance to Subjects to ſhake off the Yoke, than the Immuſical Converſation of a Supercilious or Complaining Wife do's Licentiate a Bill of Divorce. There is no State here ſo Propitious and Serene, but it may ſometimes be Overcaſt, or Sullied with a Cloud: There is no Condition on this ſide Heaven ſo Guarded and Secure, but may be attended with Calamitous and Fatal Appendages: And whenſoever this happens by a juſt *Nemeſis*, or ſeverer Providence, an Abſolute Reſignation to the Divine Will becomes our Indiſpenſible Duty, and may prove our Glory and Conſolation too, if we are not antecedently wanting to our ſelves.

The

The Common Popular Orators of the Age, that can harangue ſo fluently about the Tremendous Conſequences of Paſſive Obedience, do ſeldom ſeriouſly weigh, or elſe ſtudiouſly Conceal the Conſequences of Rebellion, which will be ever found to be more Durable and Miſchievous. This St. *Paul* well knew, and therefore founded this Important and Inviolable Duty upon Reaſons that are perpetual and unalterable: For, as he inſtructs us, the Supream Magiſtrate is the Ordinance of God; His Power is Ordain'd of God; he is the Miniſter of the Great Immutable God, and not of the Giddy and Capritious Multitude: Now theſe Reaſons hold good equally at all times, ſubſiſt under all the Alterations of the World, are the ſame now in *England*, that they were at *Rome* heretofore; and conſequently the Duty muſt be ſo too: 'Tis the ſame yeſterday, to day, and for ever.

I know the *Patrons* of Reſiſtance tell us, that this Obligation indeed does take Place and Sway; where *ſic volo*, *ſic jubeo* is a *Law*; and the Magiſtrates Will the Sole Political Standard; and that, Becauſe Religion alone does not Authorize Reſiſtance. But when 'tis once ſtamp't a *Civil Right*, and is interwoven and mixt with the Polity of a Nation; we may ſtand up in Defence

fence of our *Legal Rights*, and, by Vertue of this, we may Reſiſt for our Religion. This is the Ultimate Refuge of our State-Libertines: All their various plauſible Sophiſtry dwindles to this at laſt; and this, I think, is ſoon reducible to nothing:

For 'tis purely precarious; nay, includes a lamentable Miſtake: And that, becauſe this Evangelical Duty was directed to Perſons that were veſted with Civil Rights, and ſuffer'd the moſt horrid Rapes and Uſurpations. The *Imperial Prerogative* was bounded by Law; and became a *Civil* Eſtabliſhment in the days of *Auguſtus*, (as *Strabo* and *Dio* report) by the Concurrent Suffrage of the People and Senate; and the *Roman* Government was *Civilis non Tyrannica dominatio* in the Days and Language of *Tertullian*. The *Roman* Subjects were as great Aſſerters of their Liberties, and look't as big, upon the account of their Priviledges, as the Free-born People of *England*: How great their Immunities, and yet what Illegal Invaſions were made upon 'em: How Unjuſt their Tortures, and yet how Reſign'd and Paſſive they were in their Perſons (even when the *Valerian* Law was in force to defend their Rights) may be ſeen and read in the Complaining Apologiſts and Hiſtorians of thoſe Ages;

Ages; but the particular Inſtances would ſwell this Diſcourſe into too large and troubleſome a Volume.

But alas! Such Examples as theſe do rather Upbraid, than inſtruct the Zealots of our Daies; who Act, and Demean themſelves after ſuch a rate, as if the Chriſtian's Portion were only in this Life, and Religion were to be Modell'd according to Conveniencies of State. There is nothing Heroical and Gallant left among us: All that is Puiſſant and Brave has fled the World. That Spirit of Chriſtianity, which Enlighten'd and Adorn'd the Primitive Ages, is now degenerated into Empty Cant, or loaded with Invectives: Would you know, what's become of Chriſtian Reſignation? Why, with ſome 'tis *Heart-fixedneſs, Nothingneſs and Broken-heartedneſs.* By others 'tis called *the Venom of the Dragon, the Tare of the Wicked one, Court-Flattery, and the Fawning of the Serpent*: Or, (to ſpeak in the Old Stile of Brain-leſs Mr. *Vicars*, and Earleſs Mr. *Prynn*) 'tis *Kixey Conformity, Popiſh Pedlary, Babiloniſh Trumpery, and Deviliſh Malignancy againſt Chriſt.*

In the laſt place, Enter *Liberty* (with all its Train of Artillery:) This has been a Famous Actor indeed upon the Stage of Humane Affairs: It has been a Protection of all Sorts and Degrees

of Criminals rand Debauchees; It can Swear and Fight, Plunder and Kill through all the Points of the Compaſs: Backbiting, Perjury, and Libelling of Princes; Sodomy, Inceſt, and all Unnatural Luſts have defended themſelves with the Pompous Name of Liberty. Liberty! That can Transform a Jeſuitical Band of Regicides and Conſpirators, into a Bright Conſtellation of Saints and Martyrs: Liberty! That can change the very beſt of Kings into the worſt of Tyrants; and give the blackeſt Villains an Apotheſis. Liberty! That can Convert a Kingdom's Wealth into the Poſſeſſion of the Saints, and make a Creeping Mendicant Cloak-Man, an Heir or Executor at his Will and Pleaſure.

In ſhort, There is no greater Slavery or Oppreſſion in the World, than a Lawleſs and Unbounded Liberty: 'Twas an affectation of this that made our Firſt Parents Rebel againſt God, and hath prompted others to Rebel againſt his Vicegerents: 'Twas a Sin of this Complexion that occaſion'd the Unparallel'd Murder of our God-like Martyr, for which our Land Mourns at this very Day; and which ſeems to continue (like the Firſt Tranſgreſſion) a laſting Curſe and Debt upon Poſterity.

And

And thus, Sir, have I (as briefly as I could) animadverted upon ſome of thoſe *Pious Frauds*, that Adorn and Recommend this *plauſible Two-handed Sermon*. There is a Vein of Crafty and Ambiguous Senſe and Expreſſion running through a great part of the Contexture; and this, I believe, he takes to be a Choice and Wondrous Perfection; though 'tis really his *Blind ſide*: It may ſuit well enough with a Dark and Subtle Diſciple of *Old Noll*; but Ill becomes an Ingenious Servant, much leſs a Miniſter, of Chriſt. He has indeed a peculiar Knack at wounding with a Slie, Oblique, and Paltry Suggeſtion; at Stabbing and yet looking another way, as if he were wholly Innocent and Unconcern'd: *Ex. Gr. But had they lived under a King, who by an Open Example and Encouragement of Debauchery, ſhould have drawn the People from their Covenant with the Lord, and by Secret Favours*, &c. p. 4. Theſe, and the reſt that follow, are very perillous ſhrewd ſayings in good ſooth. He'll make (no queſtion) an hopeful Old Man in time, if he have already ſuch a Reaching and Penetrating Noddle. I dare engage (in this fit of Conſcience, or Spruntneſs) he would not have ſpar'd the Wiſeſt of Princes upon Record, had he chanc't to have ſtood in his way. Bleſſed Jeſu! To

what

what a wretched Height can Ingratitude, and Spiritual Pride exalt it ſelf? Do's not ſuch Purulent Spittle argue a Man's Soul to be Tainted and Ulcerated with Malice? Muſt a *Solomon*'s Frailties be thus Aggravated and Expoſed, and all his Vertues and Wiſdom be forgotten? Was it not enough, That a Juſt, Kind, and good Natur'd Prince ſhould be Revil'd and Conſpir'd againſt while alive; but muſt he be perſecuted again, even beyond the Grave? Tell not this to the Unconverted World: Publiſh it not in the Streets of *Rome* or *Jeruſalem*; leſt *Turks* and *Infidels* ſhake the Head at us; leſt the *Greeks* and *Romans* again laugh us to Scorn. I muſt further add, That *our Author* ſeems to take as much pains to Leſſen, if not Encourage, the Crying Diabolical Sin of Rebellion, as ſome have lately took to Mollifie Damnation it ſelf: People may not *pretend to a Legal Juriſdiction, yet have a Right of Self-Preſervation*: *i. e.* They may Rebel for Conſcience ſake, or by Virtue of an Inward Call; but they muſt have an Eſpecial Care leſt they hurt their Prince, while they Fire and Shoot at him; They muſt only fight to make him a *Glorious King*. He would ſurely make a moſt Profound and Notable Expounder of *Ezekiel*, and I believe his Nurſe was little leſs than a Sibyl; or

at

at leaſt a Mighty Woman at Riddles: But I ſhall content my ſelf with more plain and familiar things.

Now that Man is a perfect *Minor* in Underſtanding, and under Years of Diſcretion; that do's not know, that Rebellion is a Dangerous, and Infinitely Encroaching Thing: And, if it be not ſtifled in its Seed or Principle, it will, when 'tis kindled, bid defyance to all Controul, and run along like an irreſiſtible Burning: And (however ſome may Mince and Palliate the matter) 'twill be found a Maxim of Eternal Verity, That whoſoever gives Power to any to riſe up againſt their Prince, and take the *Crown from His Head*, gives Licence to others to take his *Head* from his *Shoulders*.

I have look't upon this laſt Aſſertion of our *Author*, with more Scorn and Severity than otherwiſe I ſhould have done, becauſe it carries with it an Ungrateful and Rude Intimation to His preſent Majeſty, and proclaims aloud, what he is to expect upon Non-performance of *Articles*. 'Tis an Ungenerous, Daſtardly, and Creeping Innuendo to a Valiant and *Brave Prince*, who is undoubtedly the *Greateſt Heroe* of his *Age*, and has a *Soul* large enough to Animate more than *Three Kingdoms*: And *pray God* defend both Him and

us, from the *Raging of the Sea*, and the *Madneſs of the People*; or from the *French* and *Bloody Roman* on the one hand, and a Domineering *Kirk*, and *Oliverian Inquiſition* on the other.

And now, Sir, after all this, I hope you will not think that I am ſo vain an Animal, as to be enamoured of the Gallows, to court Racks and Wheels, or to be fond of being ſtuck round with pointed Daggers, and looking like the *Man* in the *Almanack*: For I do ingeniouſly own, that I do naturally ſhrink at the apprehenſion of ſuch a *Fate*, like other Ordinary Mortals: But though I am neither Valiant, nor yet weary of the World; and (having hitherto had but a ſmall Taſte of the Pleaſures of Senſe, in compariſon to what an Innocent Man might enjoy) am willing enough to have my Portion and Share in thoſe Limited Pleaſures, to which the more Delicate and beſt Complexion'd Youth are enclin'd; Though I could freely and cheerfully Aſpire here below to enlarge my Knowledge, ſatisfie my Inquiſitive Fancy, and entertain my Curioſity with a new Scene of things; yet am I much more raviſht by Reading, and Reflecting upon the *Paſſive Virtues*, and *Moral Gallantry* of Brave Men in former Ages, that have deſpis'd the World, and enlighten'd Mankind with

with their Incomparable Sufferings for the Truth. How do I Adore the Memory of *Socrates*, of *Seneca*, and *Epictetus*, Men who were in the World, but not of it; and who could part with Lives to preſerve their Innocence and Vertue? How am I Tranſported beyond the bounds of Humane Joy, at the Hiſtory of *Ignatius*, and the reſt of the Inſpir'd Martyrs, who by Divine Aid vanquiſh't Impoſſibilities; dreaded no Scourges but thoſe of a bad Conſcience, and feared no Fire but that which is Everlaſting? But, above all the reſt, I am Surpriz'd and Amaz'd at the Victorious Perſeverance of our Royal Martyr, who at ſo great a diſtance from the Times of Primitive Tryal, (and under the greateſt Temptations) carried the ſame Zeal in his Boſom, and Sealed the ſame Faith with his Blood and Dying Confeſſion.

Such was the Fate, and ſuch the Perſeverance of that good Prince; whoſe Love to all Mankind, and Ardent Zeal for the Church, made him Experiment the Scorn and Envy of Men here below, and render'd his own Glories more large and diffuſive in another World; and I do ſolemnly profeſs, I had rather chooſe to undergo all his Sufferings and Diſgraces, joyn'd with his

Such

Love and Conſtancy, than to be rap't up immediately amidſt a Quire of Angels.

If any poor-ſpirited Pedant ſhould Object, that while I Attack the Blind ſide of our Teacher, I ſeem to reflect unhandſomly upon his Lordſhip; I ſhall only Anſwer in ſhort, That I own his Lordſhip's Knowledge, in many Things, to be much Superiour to my own; but know at the ſame time, that his Lorſhip is ſo Wiſe, as never to pretend to fill an Infallible Chair, and therefore I ſhall not fear to declare my Diſſent from him in Opinion. I do further own, That I have ever been paſſionately Warm againſt the Phariſaical Zealots of the Age (our Saviour himſelf was ſo) yet never inſulted over the meer Infirmities, much leſs the Misfortunes of any; but have ever lov'd a Sweet-Temper'd and Ingenuous Diſſenter. This Principle in me (Sir) I am ſure you muſt approve of, becauſe it is your own; and becauſe it is ſo (as well as for other Reaſons) I have paid a particular Honour to your Perſon, ever ſince my firſt happy admiſſion to your Friendſhip; and in you, I am ſure, I do at once honour a *Reſignation* becoming a *Primitive Hero*, and a *Learning* that adorns the *Stile* and *Character* you bear. *I am*, &c.

A Supplement

A SUPPLEMENT TO THE Preceding Letter.

HAving hitherto endeavour'd to perſwade our Wandring Pilgrim, that he is got into By-paths, and out of his way to *Jeruſalem*; I think 'tis my Duty (as I am a Chriſtian and *Engliſhman*) to Direct and Conduct him into the Right Road, before I take my leave of him: This I ſhall Attempt, by informing him how he might have ſpent ſome part of his *Canonical Hour* of Preaching with more Juſtice and Decorum: Therefore, conſidering the Villanous occaſion of the Solemnity, I *humbly conceive* he might juſtly have Entertain'd his *Audience* after this manner;

Chriſtian Friends and Brethren,

We have ſeen a Perverſe Generation of Men riſen up among us, that by the ſtrength of Faith, without Underſtanding, will be Holier than Apoſtles, Wiſer than Philoſophers, and by the meer Pow'r of Imagination will pretend to dictate to the Holy Ghoſt: They talk much of Chriſt, yet deſpiſe his Ordinances; Nothing but Meekneſs and Hu-

mility is in their Mouths, and yet they will not ſuffer even God himſelf, to govern the Church and the World in his own way; and they Eſteem it a more Infallible Sign of Grace to rail againſt Non-Reſiſtance, and other Goſpel Injunctions; than to love the *Brotherhood*, or to Honour the *King*. Whatſoever is Eſſentially good, or Praiſe-worthy, they run down into *Heathen Notion* and *Chimera*; and whatſoever is Ridiculous and Brutiſh in our Natures, they Conſecrate into Zeal. They will be Teſty and Malitious, Malapert and Cenſorious for the *Glory of the Lord*; they will Backbite, and whine for Jeſus Chriſt's ſake; and warp their Countenances into Artificial Deformity for the Edification of the Brethren: They will juſtifie Contradictions, and Self-evident Nonſenſe by the Aſſiſtance of the *Spirit*; they will be paſſionately fond and enamour'd of the Lord Chriſt, while they violate his Laws; and maintain an intimate and cloſe *Communion* with *God*, while they Rob Churches, Defile Altars, and Aſſaſſinate Kings.

Such pretious and Dapper Saints were thoſe, that Reform'd our Church and Nation heretofore into Prophanation and Ruine; that diſtinguiſh't the beſt of Kings out of his Titles, thruſt him out of his Throne, Expos'd his *Royal Children* to Dangers and Temptations, nay, Religiouſly ſent them a begging into the World: They deceiv'd the Simple with abundance of Holy Phraſe, with Chapter, Tone and Verſe; with Bibles in their hands, with Hymns and Spiritual Songs in their Mouths, and by ſaying a *Long Grace* before their *Canibal Riots*: Nay, ſo Zealous and Demure, ſo Sanctified were they amidſt their Heathen Barbarities, that, in their own Conceits, they were little leſs than *Gods*: *They ſaw the Wickedneſs of Man was very great, and that every Thought and Imagination of his Heart was evil*: And though they could not, in that Age of Miracles, command the Elements, or cauſe the Waters to overflow; yet they were reſolv'd to puniſh Mankind another way, and overwhelm

Three

Three Kidgdoms with an Inundation of Blood. Hereupon *Saint Cromwell*, like the *Deſtroying Angel*, was Commiſſion'd to puniſh the Inhabitants of the Land, and obtain'd that *High Seat* from whence *Lucifer* fell, by imitating his *Apoſtacy* and his *Pride*: Lying and Murder were Refin'd into the Nicer Arts of Equivocation, and Cutting of Throats in the *Spirit* of *Meekneſs*: Blind Zeal was dubb'd with the Name of *Viſion* and *Inſpiration*; and whole Armies appear'd in *Mahomet's Colours* for the *Defence* of *Chriſt*. *Bind their Kings in Chains, and their Nobles in Fetters of Iron* was the *Text*. A *Solemn League* and *Covenant* was the *Comment*: Rebellion and Bloodſhed, Plunder and Sacriledge, Prophanation, and Atheiſme were the Application and Uſes.

And what could be the Import and Tendency of theſe things, but to repeat the Scorn and Cruſifixion of our Saviour, and to play with that Sacred and Awful Name, at which the Devils tremble? If ſuch Practices as theſe be the Chriſtian way to Heaven; if a Blind Zeal be the *beſt Light to our Feet*, and *a Lanthorn to our Paths*; if, by being Chriſtians, we muſt ceaſe to be Men; if Sedition, Slaughter, and cauſing Diviſions be the way to that Peace which paſſeth all Underſtanding in the Kingdom of Heaven; may it be my good Fate to paſs an Eternity among the Heathen Philoſophers: 'Twill certainly be more tolerable for *Plato*, and *Cicero*, and the reſt of the Gallant Moralliſts, at the laſt day; than for any ſuch Fal'n and Degenerate Chriſtians: And if that be true, which is ſaid of *Ariſtotle*, that he breath'd out his Soul in this Pious Invocation, *O Being of Beings, have Mercy upon me*! I had rather have my Portion with that Heathen Publican, than with ſuch Chriſtian Phariſees.

When I conſider the Infinite Pow'r of Almighty God, and how Terrible he is in his Judgments, together with that Infinite diſtance betwixt God and Man; and obſerve again with how much *Hypocriſie* Men can creep into his Preſence, or elſe runaway from the *Temple* where he dwells: I cannot but

conclude

conclude in the Words of *Job*, *When I conſider I am afraid of him.* Every *Prevaricator* is a Conſpirator againſt a Church, and every *Sciſmatical Affectation of Singularity* is a Plot againſt the Conſtitution of a Government: 'Tis in vain to pretend to ſtile our ſelves *Sons of the Beſt Church*, while *our Principles are the ſame with thoſe of other Men*; or to boaſt of being Members of a Church Reform'd, without an equal Reformation of our Lives.

Would you know, my Brethren, why I am ſo ſeverely Zealous in a good Cauſe? I will give you this Reaſon for it; When Perſons and Things Sacred are again Deſpis'd, Heav'n it ſelf is concern'd; and can any *Faithful Miniſter of Gods Word* hover and fluctuate in a Blind Neutrality, when Omnipotence bears a part of the Calumny? No, ſilence at ſuch a time becomes an unjuſtifiable Stupidity, and a Lazy Acquieſcence is little leſs than a Rebellion againſt Heav'n. And though Self-preſervation ſhould Chide me for it, and Danger ſeem to beccon me to a forbearance; Though Jeſuites and Kirk-men, Anabaptiſts and Quakers, Sweet-Singers, and Muggletonians; nay, though the *Prince of Darkneſs* himſelf, and the *King of Terrors* ſhould oppoſe and ſtand in my way; yet *Honeſty* ſhall ever be my Security, and *Orthodoxy* my Protection.

As for my part, I can no more Digeſt the Fulſom and Crude Tenets of *Milton* and *Ludloe*, together with the Black and Dirty Divinity of our New *Mechanick* Apoſtles, than I can the Dreams of a *Bridget* or *Juliana*, or the whole *Council* of *Trent*: Whatſoever our Churches Fate may prove, I am abſolutely bound to it, and if Suffering muſt be her Lot and Portion, I had rather chooſe to bear a part in the black Solemnity, than to be Dignified by her Fall: Which the God of Infinite Mercy prevent, *&c.*

F I N I S.

E R R A T A,

PAge 14, line 12, for *Apotheſis*, read *Apotheoſis.* page 19, line 5, for *with Lives*, read *with their Lives.*